

CAI

FR 71

- 14 P65

Canada. Conservation Commission 57.

*General publications*

Protection of Migratory

Birds

*6-137*



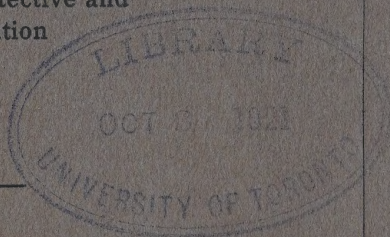
3 1761 11555664 9

BY

WILLIAM S. HASKELL

Council for

The American Game Protective and  
Propagation Association



Reprinted from the

Fifth Annual Report of the Commission of Conservation

Ottawa—Commission of Conservation—1914







CA1

FR 71

- 14P65

# Protection of Migratory Birds

---

AN ADDRESS BY

WILLIAM S. HASKELL

*Counsel for the American Game Protective and  
Propagation Association*

---

**M**R. CHAIRMAN and gentlemen of the Commission of Conservation : Last March the Congress of the United States passed what has been called the most far-reaching game protective measure which has ever been enacted into law. It is called there the *Federal Migratory Bird Law*. While the illustrations which I will show to-day are principally to elucidate another subject, yet your Chairman asked me if I would briefly speak to you about this law, and explain to you wherein it benefited the people of Canada, if anything, more than it does the people of the United States. He desired to have me try to interest you in order that you may interest the people in the various provinces and assist in procuring a convention or treaty between Great Britain and the United States, so that that law will remain a permanent one, benefiting both countries.

## Efforts to Secure Legislation

Ever since 1904, efforts have been made to enact a migratory bird law. At first, a bill was introduced in order to educate the people, to get discussion of the idea with a view to bringing out any weak points in it and ascertaining what opposition there might be to it. The principal opposition seems to have come from the jealousy of the States, because they thought their rights would be trespassed upon by the Federal Government. That, you know, has been a source of trouble in the United States and has prevented the enactment of a great many wise measures, which would be of great benefit to the entire people. The States-rights men took the position that the power had never been given to the Federal Government by the Constitution, to enable Congress to pass such a law, and there was a great deal of discussion, a great deal of argument. When the organization which I represent, the American Game Protective and Propagation Association, came into existence in the latter part



of 1911, it took up this matter with a view to focussing the support and getting the bill enacted into law. We were able to get hearings at Washington and at these hearings we had representatives from forty-four of our forty-eight States. The hearings lasted the entire day, and were conducted both before the House Committee and the Senate Committee on the same day, the speakers going from one committee to the other. The committees made favourable reports and, finally, the bill became law. That law placed under the Federal control all migratory birds, the insectivorous birds and the game birds.

It does not require argument with you, I know, to support the contention that Canada is as much benefited, if not more so, than is the United States. You know the value of the insectivorous birds. I understand that you have recently, in the vicinity of Ottawa, had trouble with the tent-caterpillar. Those birds destroy these caterpillars. This law gives absolute protection to the insectivorous birds. There is a permanent close season for them in the United States. It has been estimated by experts in the United States that, at a conservative estimate, there is an annual loss of \$800,000,000 through the depredations of insects upon crops and foliage. It has also been stated that if all bird life were destroyed, in seven years there would be no vegetation.

**Value of Game  
Birds**

With reference to game birds, they are of value for the sport they furnish, as an important source of food supply, and in many ways they are useful also because they, too, destroy harmful insects. Canada is the great breeding ground of many of these birds. They breed here, and winter in the southern portions of the United States and Mexico. On their return to the breeding grounds here in the springtime, they have, heretofore, been shot. That is of course, the time when they mate and by that shooting, not only one, but sometimes families of birds, have been destroyed. While many of the States have laws prohibiting spring shooting, some of them have refused to make such laws; they are not willing to give up their pleasure for the benefit of all. This Federal law compels them to do so, and under it, the Department of Agriculture has made a close season in the spring. That means that you will have more birds here next spring than ever before. There will be more breeding here, there will be more returning to the south in the fall.

**Advantages of  
Treaty**

Now, if a treaty is made such as is suggested, the question of whether or not the Federal Government has any power to make such a law will be forever settled, because a treaty is the supreme law of the land and no



State or Federal court can attack it. That is one of the reasons why we urge that you use your influence in having Canada join us in making such a treaty. Under its terms, you would assure the permanency of this law to the United States, and you would join us in further extending the protection to these birds. You would also join us in prohibiting the exportation of game or eggs illegally taken. You would join us in obtaining an extension of the refuge system which I know is in vogue here as well as in the United States. In fact, I know of no disadvantage to Canada which would accrue from such a treaty. It is, if anything, all in favour of Canada, and I hope that you, gentlemen, will use whatever influence you have, by discussing the matter and educating your people in the various provinces to arouse sentiment in favour of such a treaty. I hope, too, that you will petition the Dominion Government urging that it do what it can to press this matter, by requesting Great Britain to have its representative negotiate with the representative of the United States, so that such a treaty may, at a very early date, become a reality and so that we will know there will be no danger to the migratory birds in your country this coming spring.

Passing from that, I desire to describe the movement in the United States, towards the protection of wild life, especially the constructive work that has been and is now being carried on to increase it.

#### THE NATIONAL MOVEMENT FOR WILD LIFE CONSERVATION IN THE UNITED STATES

We preserve wild life by propagation and by maintaining refuges where the game and birds shall not be disturbed, and from which the surrounding territory will be restocked by the overflow from these protected areas.

##### National Sanctuaries

The United States has now almost one hundred national reservations which afford such refuges. During the last ten years, they have also established by executive order about sixty-four bird refuges, scattered throughout our country for the purpose of affording protection to important breeding colonies. There are a number of such reservations in Alaska, on the islands off the coast of California and in the Hawaiian islands. In all of these, the game and birds live and breed under the care of wardens, free from any disturbing interruptions.

Many of the States have set aside lands for similar purposes. Pennsylvania, I am informed, leads in the establishment of game refuges. This State has acquired about a million acres of forest



land, called State Forest Reserves, scattered through twenty-six of the sixty-seven counties of that State. Five great game preserves, or refuges have been established in favourable localities in them. In the centre of a great forest reserve, the State Game Commission has selected a specially desirable tract of woodland, and has marked its boundaries by the stringing of a single heavy wire, surrounding the entire refuge. Within the boundary wire, all wild life, except vermin, has an absolute sanctuary, and within this area no one is allowed to hunt or fire a gun. Even in the open season, when hunting is allowed in the State Forest Reserves, it is prohibited here. So the region surrounding them now teems with deer, grouse and other game. The Game Commission intends to increase these preserves until there is one at least in each county.

The state of New York has set aside for such a reserve the Adirondack State Park, containing about one million three hundred thousand acres of forest lands, with numerous lakes and streams, but has not yet adopted the refuge system. A bill granting power to the Conservation Commission to establish such refuges will be introduced within a few days. Montana and Wyoming have similar State preserves. Louisiana and Florida have also large areas devoted to wild fowl refuges, and there are many others.

Associations, clubs and individuals have, in many States, acquired either by sale or lease, land which is used for game refuges. On most of these no shooting whatever is allowed. On some, game is propagated and shooting is allowed in the season.

<b>Aims of Game Protective Association</b>	About two years ago, the American Game Protective Association was organized by the co-operation of eleven companies that manufacture fire-arms and ammunition, which desired to contribute to the cause of wild life preservation. While there have been numerous similar associations in the field, yet none of them have been so organized and backed with capital that the permanency of their work is assured.
--	--

The chartered objects of this Association are :

- (a) To preserve and propagate game and fish.
- (b) To urge enactment of proper laws to that end and to obtain uniformity of such throughout the country.
- (c) To co-operate with and assist the proper authorities, clubs, associations and individuals in enforcing these laws.
- (d) To establish and maintain preserves and reserves where game may be protected.
- (e) To awaken public interest in the work of protecting and propagating wild life and to demonstrate that propagation is a

practical means of increasing the general food supply and can be made commercially successful.

**East Head Game Farm**

Obtaining a six thousand acre tract of land in Massachusetts, in the towns of Plymouth and South Carver near cape Cod, the Association established a propagation plant, and began to raise game birds with the view to sending them to its members throughout the country, who would protect them in refuges, enable them to increase, and in due time release them in order that the covers might be restocked. This farm, known as the East Head Game Farm, has numerous lakes, ponds, and pond holes which are natural feeding grounds for wild fowl. The natural cover is excellent for quail and grouse, and these birds are numerous. It has, within its borders, a large tract of wild land wonderfully suited to the heath hen, which is now extinct on the continent of North America, but which is being propagated at Marthas Vineyard, with a view to again introducing it. The region is also well suited for the needs of pheasants, for thousands of them have been raised year after year during the last ten years and they winter well there.

A forest nursery has been set out on the farm, and, from time to time, trees will be transplanted from this nursery to various parts of the property with a view to reforesting that portion of the tract where the trees have been destroyed by forest fires. Shrubs, such as barberry, hawthorn and sumach, which furnish food for upland birds have been planted. Buckwheat and other grains are raised for the birds. Wild celery has been planted in many of the ponds, and grain is thrown in and around them so that the water fowl will remain and nest in the vicinity. English ringnecked pheasants in large numbers have been raised during the last year and a half. Mallard, pin-tail, black and wood-ducks, wild turkeys, Canada geese, snow geese and, most important of all, quail and partridge have been successfully raised.

**Artificial Propagation**

All game protectionists are now agreed that the game laws of the past have failed to prevent the rapid decrease of the game, and that the two most important measures for its protection and increase, are the propagation of game by means of the game sanctuary. As the East Head farm is within a few miles of the sea, near the base of cape Cod, and almost directly in the line of flight of birds from cape Cod to Buzzard bay, it affords a natural refuge for the wild fowl, which pass there in large numbers, in their migrations, and find shelter and food during storms at sea. The land is posted, and no shooting, except to de-



stroy vermin is allowed. This is the most important refuge for wild game in the Northern States and corresponds with the Ward-McIlhenny refuge in Louisiana. If similar ones can be established at suitable intermediate points on the Atlantic coast, the question of wild fowl conservation will be determined. This will have to be done by private capital, as there is no prospect of Federal or State action along that line.

With the permission of the fish and game commissioners of the state of Massachusetts, eggs of the native quail and ruffed grouse were taken from nests on the farm and in the immediate vicinity. These were placed under bantam hens, and from those hatched during the first year, a substantial breeding stock of quail and partridge was obtained. During the second year, the eggs were taken from these birds and placed under hens. By this method, it was possible to get seventy-five or more eggs from a quail and a very substantial number from the ruffed grouse. The young birds are fed on ants' eggs, chopped hard boiled eggs and specially prepared foods. They find much insect life which is their natural diet, and they have access to plenty of green stuff. During the last season, from a clutch of eighteen quail's eggs hatched under a bantam, seventeen quail are now living, and seven young birds from a clutch of eight eggs of the ruffed grouse were hatched under the hen and are now living. All these birds are strong and healthy, and, barring accidents, will furnish good breeding stock for next season. This second generation of ruffed grouse has created much comment and interest.

Good roads run to the farm, and a very comfortable bungalow has been built for the use of visitors who desire to study the methods employed there, as it is the intention of the Association to give instructions to those who wish to start similar farms or sanctuaries. In this way, it is hoped that such will become common throughout the United States.

State  
Sanctuaries      One of the directors of the Association made a study, this last summer, of conditions in the state of Connecticut and found that there was available about one-third of the entire acreage of the State suitable for game sanctuaries and game farms. This land was not suitable for agriculture, and, therefore, was of comparatively little value. It is his plan to induce public spirited citizens of the State to acquire such tracts, with the view to having numerous sanctuaries where game may increase, and thus restock the covers.

In Massachusetts there are about 2,000,000 acres of forest land. Several years ago, Mr. E. H. Forbush, the State ornithologist, made



a canvass of the public lands of that State, which have been made game bird reservations under the law, and he found that there were about 50,000 acres of such lands, all under protection of the State authorities. He thinks that, without interfering with its value for forestry purposes, at least 1,000,000 acres might be made available for refuges for the protection of wild life.

In the state of Vermont, there are large tracts of timber and abandoned farm lands which would make good game refuges, some of them ranging in area from five to fifteen thousand acres. Under the law of this State, the authorities may establish such refuges, and one has just been so established.

Undoubtedly, inquiries now being made by the Association, will develop similar conditions in almost every State. Efforts will be made to have such lands set aside for game refuges.

**Wild Ducks from Manitoba** About two years ago, two public spirited citizens, interested in wild life conservation, acquired about four thousand acres of waste land in the state of Connecticut, with a view to establishing there a sanctuary for wild fowl, and of increasing the supply of game by scientific propagation. They sent an expert to lake Winnipegosis in Manitoba to study the habits of the ducks that nest and breed in that region which is in the heart of the great duck breeding grounds of this continent, and to bring back young ducklings to form a nucleus for the propagating work.

About thirteen different species, including a considerable number of canvas-backs, were thus procured, pictures were taken showing their nests, and the situations and conditions surrounding the breeding places of these birds have been reproduced on the Connecticut farm. A certain number of them are pinioned, so as to supply a breeding stock, but a large majority so raised are allowed to migrate with the wild fowl which come to the refuge on their migrations. The birds born and bred in the refuge return to it on their flights north, knowing that they will find protection in their old home. The experiment has been most successful and is encouraging those who feel that propagation is one of the very important measures which must be undertaken to restore the wild bird life to the United States.

Under the Weeks-McLean Migratory Bird Law, which the American Game Protective Association was instrumental in having passed at the last session of Congress, the Mississippi river between Minneapolis, Minn., and Memphis, Tenn., and the Missouri river between Bismarck, Nor. Dak. and Nebraska City, Neb., are made



refuges for all migratory birds. With the awakening of public interest evidenced by the strong support given by people in every part of the United States in the campaign for the enactment of this law, which has been referred to as the most important game protective measure yet enacted, those interested in the preservation of wild life have been encouraged in the belief that these ideas of artificial increase of the game supply, by propagation and by its natural increase with the help of such refuges, will soon restore our wild bird life so that its extinction will be impossible.





Gov. Doc  
Can  
Com

Canada. Conservation Comm  
Protection of migratory  
birds

**University of Toronto  
Library**

**DO NOT  
REMOVE  
THE  
CARD  
FROM  
THIS  
POCKET**

Acme Library Card Pocket  
LOWE-MARTIN CO. LIMITED



